



Letter from Labour Leader Andrew Little for AIDS Candlelight Memorial Services throughout New Zealand:

It was 33 years ago that a small group of American men organised what has been described as the consummate act of defiance – a candlelight march to not only remember those who had died of AIDs but to support those living with it. They weren't sure anyone would show up. By the end of the march they had been joined by some 10,000 people.

That march was the genesis of today's Candlelight service, a now-annual event that's become a global phenomenon attended by hundreds of thousands.

That so many turned up – and continue to turn up - is testament to all those who work tirelessly to keep alive the memory of those who have died from AIDS, and to the community agencies and volunteers who continue to support those living with HIV/AIDS.

At the same time tonight's service allows all of us to reflect on our own experiences and how we as New Zealanders can contribute to this cause by promoting awareness and advocacy.

The theme of this year's gathering - Engage, Educate, Empower – is a challenge to us all to continue to stand up for the right of people to live without prejudice or discrimination.

In lighting candles tonight we pay our respects to, and celebrate the lives of, those who didn't live to share this moment.

Andrew Little

Leader of the Opposition